

## Allen-Scott Report

# Some Legislators Asked Kennedy During Briefing to Go Further

By ROBERT S. ALLEN and PAUL SCOTT

Congressional leaders raised only one major challenge to President Kennedy's seven-point program for quarantining Cuba.

In their historic White House conference, they questioned the President on whether he was going far enough in limiting military action to a "selective" sea-and-air blockade of Cuba.

After listening to a two-hour briefing by the President, CIA Director John McCone, Secretary Dean Rusk and Defense Secretary McNamara, the bipartisan group of legislators vigorously urged consideration of stronger military measures, ranging from an immediate invasion to a total military blockade of Cuba.



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Rep. Carl Vinson, D-Ga., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, took the lead, contending, "It is time to go all the way. We should invade immediately to eliminate this Soviet military build-up just 90 miles from our shores."

HE TOLD THE President that he fully supported his proposals, but was concerned that they did not provide for elimination of the Castro regime.

"There should be no half-way measures," Vinson warned. "Khrushchev respects force and firmness. If he sees that this country means business, he will back down and will not interfere with our ships or planes."

Sen. Richard Russell, D-Ga., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, fully endorsed Vinson's proposal, adding that a total blockade of armed shipments to Cuba be put into effect immediately.

"If time is needed to prepare for and mount an invasion of Cuba, we should clear the way for a sea blockade, as some shipments immediately," declared Russell. "Your selective blockade is a step in the right direction. But it doesn't go far enough. All kinds of supplies from the Soviet Union, whether they involve a 1,000-ton missile, jet bomber, or a barrel of oil, should be stopped."

"I HAVE NOT ruled out either course of action," reported the President, "but takes time to launch an invasion or the size needed to secure the island. By following the plan I have outlined, the world now will have sufficient time to reactively support its course in Cuba."

"And I agree," they continued in one of the briefest sessions, "that the United States must be prepared to act if necessary."

ICBM bases. I will have no other alternative than to follow your proposals," said the President. "Until we determine Soviet reaction, preparations for all eventualities, including invasion, are going ahead as swiftly as possible."

"Are precautionary steps being taken to prepare for a possible Soviet military strike at or blockade of West Berlin?" asked Speaker McCormack, D-Mass. "It would be my guess that if Khrushchev made any counter-move, it would come there."

"All U. S. military forces are being put on full alert," replied the President. "We are preparing for any eventuality in West Berlin. Also, I have sent former Secretary of State Acheson to Europe to brief the NATO foreign ministers on what we are doing in Cuba."

McCormack, in endorsing the President's proposals, said he was particularly impressed with "your decision to issue a direct warning to Khrushchev."

"You go directly to the heart of the Cuban problem in your direct warning to Khrushchev," McCormack told the President. "When you go on the air tonight, I hope you make it just as strong as you did here. The only thing Khrushchev respects is military strength and firmness. If he knows it will mean war, he will not move against West Berlin or try to go through the blockade."

ONE OF THE BIG surprises of the briefing came when Sen. J. William Fulbright, D-Ark., chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, urged that the President use military force to knock out the Cuban missile bases.

"It would be safer for us to go in and destroy those four missile bases than to stop Soviet ships on the high seas," argued Fulbright. "Khrushchev is sure to react violently if his vessels are intercepted and boarded."

"If we bomb those bases hundreds of Russian military technicians operating those installations would be killed," replied the President. "This could bring an even more violent reaction."

"As long as those missile bases are there," said Russell, "there is a danger that hundreds of thousands of Americans will be killed. We must use all the military force at our command to eliminate those bases."

PRESIDENT KENNEDY told the leaders he planned to seek the support of members of the Organization of American States for collective military action against Cuba before taking any further steps.

"Should we fail to obtain OAS support, I may have to come back and ask that Congress be convened into session," reported the President. "This is one of the reasons I am asking you to remain in Washington the next 72